

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES
JUN 13 1928
LIBRARY

A
0
0
1
3
9
3
6
2
6
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

Economics Circular No. 14.

October, 1922.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

CURRENT PROBLEMS IN HOME ECONOMICS
INSTRUCTION AND SUPERVISION.

By HENRIETTA W. CALVIN,
Specialist in Home Economics, Bureau of Education.

Report of a series of conferences of supervisors and teachers of home economics, called by the United States Commissioner of Education, and held at—

New York City, N. Y.	February 16, 17, 18.
Chicago, Ill.	March 3, 4.
Spokane, Wash.	April 4, 5, 6.
Portland, Oreg.	April 7, 8.
San Francisco, Calif.	April 12, 13.
Los Angeles, Calif.	April 21, 22.
Logan, Utah.	April 28.
Salt Lake City, Utah.	April 29.
Denver, Colo.	May 5, 6.
Kansas City, Mo.	May 12, 13.
Boston, Mass.	July 6.

INTRODUCTION.

In January, 1922, plans were started for a series of conferences for those interested in public school home economics education. Representatives from 36 States were in attendance at these meetings, and over 1,200 home-economics teachers participated in the discussions. All except the first two were open to all home economics women interested in public-school education. The first two were for city supervisors of home economics.

The programs for these conferences were prepared from answers to questionnaires sent out to the home economics teachers of the several regions. The topics which were most often requested in any region were placed upon the regional program for that region. The speakers selected for opening the subjects were each limited to 15 or 20 minutes. A free discussion followed each address and usually lasted one hour. In many of the conferences special committees con-

tinued their consideration of the topics throughout luncheon, dinner, and evening.

The following is a typical program and the general statement that was sent with it:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
BUREAU OF EDUCATION.

WASHINGTON,
January 30, 1922.

CONFERENCE OF CITY SUPERVISORS OF HOME ECONOMICS.

PROGRAM.

Thursday, February 16.

6.30 p. m. Dinner, Stockton Tea Room, 306 West One hundred and ninth Street, New York City.

"Relation of home economics teachers to school health and nutrition work"—Dr. Mary Swartz Rose, Columbia University. Discussion. Agnes Craig, supervisor of home economics, Springfield, Mass.

Friday, February 17.

9.30 a. m. Assembly Hall, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, N. Y. "Home economics courses of study for junior high schools"—Grace Gillett, Albany, N. Y.

9.50 a. m. General discussion.

11.00 a. m. "Improvement of teachers in service"—Grace Schermerhorn, director of cooking, New York City.

11.20 a. m. General discussion.

12.00 m. Luncheon, lunch room, Pratt Institute.

1.30 p. m. "Home economics in platoon schools"—Ethel Mason Coan, supervisor of home economics, Buffalo, N. Y.

1.50 p. m. Discussion.

2.30 p. m. "Home economics departments in new school buildings"—Frances Zuill, supervisor of home economics, Baltimore, Md.

2.50 p. m. Discussion.

3.30 p. m. Visit to newly equipped home economics departments, Public School 29.

Evening. Informal conferences and committee meetings.

Saturday, February 18.

9.30 a. m. Teachers' College, Columbia University. Room to be announced. "What elective courses will attract senior high-school girls?"—Mary Henleigh Brown, Somerville, Mass.

9.50 a. m. Discussion.

11.00 a.m. (a) "Use of cooking-class products; (b) How may home economics be made to function in the home life of the children?" General discussion.

Luncheon: Horace Mann Lunch Room.

1.30 p. m. "Elementary school home economics courses; (a) Content; (b) Preparation of the teacher"—Alice L. Currier, Pawtucket, R. I.

1.50 p. m. Discussion.

2.30 p. m. "Can instruction be so varied as to meet the needs of the individual students?" General discussion.

3.00 p. m. Committee conclusions.

*General information.**Headquarters.*—McAlpin Hotel.

February 16. Dinner, 6.30 p. m. sharp. Stockton Tea Room, 306 West One hundred and ninth Street. Tickets \$2. Send money for reservation to Miss Grace Schermerhorn, 131 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. It is necessary to have approximate number of reservations known by February 12.

To reach Pratt Institute.—Enter Brooklyn Rapid Transit subway at corner of McAlpin Hotel; take train via bridge to DeKalb Station. On coming to surface, take outbound DeKalb Avenue car. Get off at Ryerson Street, where Pratt Institute is located.

Committees to be formed the first morning on the following topics:

Junior high-school course of study.

Home economics and health work.

Improvement of teachers in service.

Courses of study for fifth and sixth grades.

Elective courses for grades 10-12, inclusive.

Adequate curricula for home economics teacher preparation.

It is suggested that each supervisor decide which committee she wishes to join. Committees will choose own chairman and arrange for meetings. It is hoped reports will be ready Saturday afternoon.

Please arrange to stay until 4.30 p. m., Saturday, that the last of our meetings may be as profitable as the first.

There will be no exhibits.

All home economics teachers in colleges and normal schools and all State supervisors of home economics are most welcome at all meetings of this conference and are invited to participate in the discussions.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
BUREAU OF EDUCATION.

WASHINGTON.

THE CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK OF CITY SUPERVISORS OF HOME ECONOMICS.

Evening February 16; all of February 17 and 18.

The city supervisors attending the conference will be from cities varying in population from less than 20,000 to more than 4,000,000.

The size of the city, the degree of congestion, the nativity of population (whether largely foreign or strongly American), and the types of employment most common, all these affect the problems confronting the home economics supervisor. These differences in problems will cause variations in the viewpoints of those participating in the conference.

A few cities have been listed according to population as an aid to the supervisors who wish to group themselves together at luncheons and at other times for special discussions.

The group of largest cities includes New York City, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Boston.

The 300,000 group includes the following cities: Washington; Jersey City; Providence, R. I.; Newark, N. J.; and Rochester, N. Y.

The 100,000 group is the largest. The following are some of the cities in which the problems should be somewhat similar: Paterson, Camden, Trenton, N. J.; Cambridge, Springfield, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Somerville, New Bedford, Worcester, Mass.; Scranton, Harrisburg, Johnstown, Erie, Pa.; Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, Conn.; Richmond, Norfolk, Va.; Wilmington, Del.; Manchester, N. H.; Pawtucket, R. I.; Albany, Schenectady, Syracuse, Troy, Yonkers, Utica, N. Y.

The smaller city group includes the following, and among these there should be many problems in common: Haverhill, Holyoke, Malden, Mass.; Bangor, Lewiston, Me.; Woonsocket, R. I.; Burlington, Vt.; Nashua, N. H.; Meriden, Conn.; Auburn, Amsterdam, Elmira, Jamestown, Niagara Falls, N. Y.

SOME PRESSING QUESTIONS.

The junior high school is apparently an accepted advance step in school organization. Home-economics people must be ready to adjust their courses to the prevailing ideas in regard to junior high-school organization.

The platoon plan is growing in popularity. For instance, all Detroit schools have now been reorganized into platoon schools. Have home-economics women definite ideas of what may be done in their subject under this arrangement of work?

A great interest in *child health work* has developed. This is manifested by nutrition clinics. What part are home-economics teachers to have in this movement for instruction in right food habits for all children and special feeding for malnourished?

Almost all school building programs are five or more years behind the needs of the school population. What shall home-economics women seek in the *new buildings to be constructed?*

Economy is essential in all school operations. How can home-economics teaching be both efficient and economical?

What should the supervisor expect from the schools training home-economics teachers? More of what? Less of what?

How can home economics be "sold" to the young teachers of home economics?

How can the work of teachers in service be improved? These and other questions will be discussed, and committees will be appointed to codify the opinions arrived at.

Headquarters will be at the McAlpin Hotel. Rates are as follows: One person in room without bath, \$3.50 and up; two persons in room without bath, \$5.50 and up; one person in room with bath, \$4.50 and up; two persons in room with bath, \$6.50 and up.

It would be well in writing for a reservation to mention the fact that you will be in attendance at the conference of home-economics supervisors and that you wish to be placed on the sixth floor if possible. It is well to state type of room desired.

Miss Grace Schermerhorn, 131 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, is arranging for the dinner to be held the evening of February 16. It is desirable that she know as soon as possible the names of those expecting to be present.

ATTENDANCE.

In general the conferences began with a dinner and continued through two days. Local arrangements were made by local supervisors and teachers. Without that cooperation the holding of so many conferences would not have been possible.

The numbers in attendance at the conferences varied from about 40 to 220. One hundred proved to be a good working group. Too small a number gave diversified interests without a sufficient number having a common interest in one particular problem. Too large a number had a tendency to suppress free discussion and to resolve itself into an ordinary meeting with a few doing all the talking.

THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.

Without exception there were requests from every section of the country that consideration be given to the question of the place of home economics in the junior high school, the type of course to be presented, and the amount of time to be allotted to this subject.

These conclusions were reached: That any course or method in home economics which is suitable for use in junior high schools is equally valuable for use in the upper two grades of an eight-grade school and the first grade of the regular four-year high school; that the instruction should be of such a nature as is of most value to a girl of the age, mental development, social and economic environment, and personal interests in these grades without regard to the particular school organization set up in the city or section of the city in which she happens to live; that home economics should be a required subject in grades 7 to 9, inclusive; that the minimum time allotted to home economics should be about 220 minutes per week in the seventh and eighth grades; that not less than 220 minutes, and if possible 310 minutes, per week should be assigned in the ninth grade to home economics; that while home-economics women as a rule prefer double periods for laboratory work, it is possible to do excellent work in 55 or 60 minute periods; that 45-minute laboratory periods are too short to accomplish satisfactory results; that better results can be obtained with daily periods for part of the year than scattered periods throughout the year—i. e., if the school "hour" is of 45 minutes, then 90 minutes daily for one-half year is more desirable than 90 minutes twice a week each week throughout the year; or if the school "hour" is of 60 minutes, then 60 minutes every day for two-thirds of the year is most to be desired; that home economics should be broadly interpreted and that cooking and sewing are but phases of home economics, which heretofore have been stressed to the exclusion of other perhaps more important home economics subject matter.

In these conferences it was evident that but 1 girl in 12 will enroll for a full four-year home-economics course; hence, that whatever may be considered the minimum home-economics training essential for the well-being of all girls should be included as required work in grades below the tenth.

In the East a strong argument for the above conclusion was that more than 50 per cent of the girls entering the senior high school will elect the commercial curriculum, which curriculum rarely allows a place for elective courses in home economics.

In the Northwest the conditions are very different. Commercial courses are not so popular, but early marriages are more common, and they frequently terminate high-school attendance.

In all discussions it was borne in mind that the majority of girls in the public junior high schools come from homes where economy and thrift are necessary and in many of which good standards of sanitation and household management under American conditions are not practiced. It was also recognized that at present three out of every five American girls are gainfully employed between the ages of 16 and 24 years; hence, what is given to them in home economics must be given as early as possible in their school life.

Objectives.—With these conclusions accepted, the discussions centered about ways most effective for accomplishing the objectives determined upon. These objectives were: (a) To cultivate an appreciation of home life; (b) to aid in forming right food habits; (c) to promote home helpfulness and to teach the use of common household equipment; (d) to stimulate an interest in the reasons for, as well as the methods of, doing certain household tasks; (e) to develop judgment and to cultivate intelligent choice in food, clothing, and shelter; (f) to assist in establishing ideals of ethical conduct; (g) to awaken a desire for worthy use of leisure.

Organization of work.—The pros and cons were presented in regard to two plans for the organization of home-economics class work, viz, alternating lessons, i. e., parallel courses in foods and clothing, and intensive courses first on one phase of home economics, then upon another.

There was some question as to the possibility of the latter arrangement when teachers were unevenly trained in the different types of home economics, but it was shown that, wherever there were two sections of one class meeting or two classes in home economics meeting at the same time, it was quite as easy to organize the instruction into alternating cycles of six or nine weeks of intensive work as to alternate the types of work either daily or weekly. This adjustment is an administrative problem not impossible of solution when there is a decision that the intensive type of instruction secures the best results.

Projects.—On the assumption that the intensive unit plan will prove most satisfactory and that the units should center around problems in foods, clothing, and shelter, it became evident that there might be differences of opinion in regard to the projects selected for these units.

The consensus of opinion favored the meal plan for food teaching. Whether the first meal chosen should be breakfast, luncheon, or supper was not agreed. Arguments were presented in favor of supper lessons first. These were that it is most easily used by the child in her own home. While breakfast has often been chosen as the first project, it is quite possible that a child will not arise in time to assist in breakfast preparation, though she can easily help about supper.

Because the socialized method of teaching is accepted as the better method, it was suggested that the pupils of the seventh grade be permitted to choose which meal they wished to study first and that the series of lessons be evolved from the answers to such questions as "What should I eat for breakfast, that I may be strong and well?"; "What fruits in the market are reasonably priced?" "What vegetables in the markets are grown locally and are in season?" "What can I do that will really help mother in the kitchen?"

In like manner after the teacher has decided the general type of material she wishes to use in clothing projects, she should allow her class (either individually or as a group) to select the garments to be made.

This variety of problems will permit adaptation of instruction to the ability of the pupil and will create within the pupil a more personal interest. No project should be decided upon which entails the purchase of material the type of which is unsuited to the economic and social status of the homes from which the pupils come.

The special objectives of this instruction should be to teach the use of the sewing machine and commercial pattern and to give a degree of dexterity in hand sewing through making timely and suitable garments and to emphasize the relationship of the child to other members of the family.

It was suggested that any particular article of temporary interest should be made if the children desired to do so. An illustration of this practice was the making of brightly colored aprons, so much liked by girls at present, and bloomers to be substituted for drawers.

It was further suggested that more colorful problems be selected, since they are much more interesting to a girl than the all-white work so often insisted upon.

Instruction in cost, care, and laundering should accompany the work upon every garment.

At the close of the seventh grade a girl should know how to do simple sewing by hand and machine; how to use a commercial pattern; how to make such garments as plain underclothes and simple gingham outer garments; how to laundry and how to mend cotton garments; and how to select suitable materials. She should have developed a greater interest in the household operations within her own home, a willingness to serve other members of the family, and a desire to lessen her mother's labor. She should know what food materials are essential to the maintenance of her own health, how to read and interpret a simple recipe, and how to regulate cooking temperature. She should be able satisfactorily to prepare alone a plain meal such as breakfast or supper, to care for raw or cooked food, and do all necessary dish washing and kitchen cleaning. She should be able to care for her own room and to do as much work in the home as she herself makes necessary.

At the end of the eighth grade her knowledge and skill in household matters should have been further developed. She should be able to use machine attachments, clean and care for a sewing machine, make more complicated wash garments, prepare a more difficult meal, and assume more responsibility in her own home.

Since general science is frequently introduced in either the seventh or eighth grade, there is opportunity to coordinate home economics teaching with this work.

While the development of skill should be stressed in the seventh grade, the knowledge of the reasons for certain processes also should be developed. In the eighth grade much emphasis should be laid upon the scientific basis of information acquired. Too frequently the intelligence of the pupil has been underestimated, natural curiosity has been unsatisfied, and the child has been bored with the problems presented.

The ninth grade should be in the nature of a survey course preparing the pupil for intelligent and helpful living in her present home and for making wise choice of food, clothing, and environment when she becomes a wage earner.

In this grade less stress should be placed upon the development of skill and more upon intelligent judgment.

It was agreed that a study by each girl of her own condition of nutrition is highly desirable. This could be accomplished by co-operation with the physical-education department. The girl should be weighed, measured, and have her medical examination. She should then keep a record of the kinds and approximate quantities of food consumed, modifications of diet made, and results secured. Following the study of her own condition of nutrition, it was recommended that she assume responsibility for the nutritional condition of some younger child.

Purchase, care, and repair of clothing should constitute an important part of the ninth-grade course. One problem in making over garments and several problems in cleaning, removing stains, and pressing should be included. The making of costume accessories, such as collars and cuffs, and freshening hat trimmings and hats could well be a part of this grade.

It was considered advisable that every girl in the ninth grade be required to keep a clothing budget and to receive some instruction in general income budgeting.

As a considerable percentage of junior college girls do not take further high-school courses in home economics, it was concluded that during the ninth grade there should be instruction on investments and savings and simple banking practices.

During these discussions favorable comment followed one teacher's discussion, wherein she told how she and the manual-training teacher exchanged pupils for a period. The girls received a series of lessons in the mechanics of the household and the boys had a special course planned for them which gave them simple facts about food and sanitation, and also a few lessons in sewing on buttons and emergency mending.

SENIOR HIGH-SCHOOL HOME ECONOMICS.

It was repeatedly brought out in the conferences that only about 12 girls out of each 100 elect a complete high-school home economics curriculum. Commercial courses attract the eastern high-school

girl, and marriage interferes with the western girl's high-school career.

In both the East and the West there are numerous universities and colleges which will not permit more than two entrance credits of high-school work to be taken in home economics.

The general opinion of those composing these conferences was that semester units of work elective for all girls were more valuable than a fixed sequence of courses open only to those enrolling for the full high-school curriculum.

It was decided that in most instances these semester courses had best be so offered as to entitle the pupils to one-half college entrance unit credit per semester, but that for commercial-course students it might be well to provide a course of less weight if such a course would better fit into the commercial curriculum.

It was agreed that each half unit of home economics would best serve if so organized as to complete in itself, i. e., requiring no prerequisites save completion of the junior high-school home economics courses.

It was further agreed that the semester courses should require as high a standard of scholarship as any other course of equal weight in the curriculum.

In addition it was agreed that 60-minute periods given every day with projects having assigned reading and investigation were necessary if the work was to be well done. Unfortunately home economics is still, in some places, deemed a purely manual art, and rules exist prohibiting home study requirements.

Home-economics instruction worthy of senior high-school credit must require real study and definite research.

Some of the semester courses suggested were these: A semester on food selection, preparation, and service, based on a good textbook and requiring visits to markets, dairies, milk stations, abattoirs, and bakeries. A semester on costume design and dressmaking, stressing art, applied design, and the economics of buying, and entailing visits to stores, clothing factories, and cloth manufactories. A semester on household designs and house furnishing, necessitating visits to houses under construction, plumbing shops, brickyards, and other building material yards, and to furnished houses and house furnishing departments. A semester on household sanitation and household management, with visits to the city water supply system and sewage disposal plant. A semester on laws affecting the status of women and children, on banking customs, and the general principles involved in investing savings. Less intensive courses entitling the student to a fraction of a credit could be arranged for girls in the commercial or academic courses. These might be as follows:

A semester course of two hours a week on the purchase and care of wearing apparel. In this course no effort would be made to

develop skill, but rather to train in making wise choices of ready-to-wear garments, such as stockings, shoes, hats, under and outside garments, and in giving such garments proper care and repair.

A course in the purchase of ready cooked foods and in the relation of food to health and working efficiency could easily be arranged, since the employed girl is so often handicapped in her working career by difficulties preventable or curable by proper diet.

A two-hour course on the management of the income and on laws affecting the employed woman would prove both valuable and interesting.

It was shown that 600 girls in the commercial course in one business high school having 1,000 pupils elected such courses in home economics.

These conditions seem essential before elective courses will prove popular in senior high schools. The courses must be such as to interest the type of girl attending the school and meet a conscious need. The courses must be well taught by the teachers of understanding minds. The principal of the school must be one who appreciates the value of home-economics education.

RELATION OF THE HOME ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT TO THE GENERAL HEALTH PROGRAM OF THE SCHOOL.

These statements were agreed upon: That every home-economics woman should stand ready to lend her aid in insuring to all children a knowledge of what constitutes right health habits; that usually there is no other member of the school-teaching staff so well prepared to give information relating to nutrition as is the home-economics teacher; that her knowledge relating to child health is not complete, but that she can easily acquire the additional knowledge, since usually she has had college courses in chemistry, general biology, physiology, bacteriology, home nursing, and in foods and nutrition; that the discovery of sickness is the province of the doctor; that the home follow-up work in cases of disease is the province of the nurse, but that questions of diet should fall within the jurisdiction of the home-economics teacher and that she should shoulder her burden even if it for a period amounts to an excessive draft upon her time; that because her classes are largely with girls in certain grades, she should cooperate with other teachers in making her knowledge of foods available to all.

One city supervisor, without additional help, handled in her department \$10,000 worth of bread and milk each month. Because she did this, there came a time when she was given an extra clerk and an extra home-economics teacher to oversee this work in the future. This was only a part of her health service, for she also administered hot lunches supplied in most of the schools of that city.

A unique experiment in health teaching was carried out in a northwestern coast city. Instruction in right food habits was given

by the home-economics staff to groups of children suffering from malnutrition, and a spirit of competition for attaining normal weight was awakened.

The prize winners were given a trip to the home-economics department at the State university and allowed to inspect rats which were being experimented upon in order to exhibit the effects of normal and adequate diets, and various other diets, each deficient in one or more essential foods. The children were most intensely interested in seeing what happened to rats when they ate the wrong food and readily made comparisons between the rat's physical condition and their own previous condition of malnutrition.

In another city the subject matter for talks on right food habits was acquired in the home-economics classes. It was prepared in the English department, and the talks were given before all the pupils in certain lower-grade rooms. This made it possible that the teaching given to girls in these grades should be carried to both boys and girls in other grades.

In one of the largest cities in the country all lunch work is under the administration of a business department, but an assistant to the supervisor plans all menus served and provides that the particular racial and religious groups of children shall find suitable food of a type that they will relish and that will also meet their physical needs.

Wherever foods are served to school children expert direction should be secured by placing the oversight of this service under the home economics department.

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS AND ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY CONTACTS.

Every particular class presents problems of its own, and it remains for the ingenious teacher to devise means of articulating her instruction with the community life. In the conferences various teachers told of their special pieces of work along this line. One teacher has interested her pupils in the local orphans' home. At intervals all the clean stockings of this home are sent to the school and then mended by the girls in the clothing classes. Different girls choose different children and plan a dress or blouse, select the color and design, and make the garment. Three things are accomplished—the little orphan children have attractive garments differing one from another; the girls have experience in selection of design and making, and, most valuable of all, an opportunity for the practice of altruism is afforded. The pupils in the junior high schools of a California city have assumed responsibility for the welfare of the children in the day nurseries. The girls in the clothing classes have made many garments. The girls in the foods classes have gone in groups of two and prepared the noon lunches for the little children. These girls at stated times have also had the children over to the home economics department for a luncheon. These arrangements have made it possible to give

practical training in preparing food for small children besides affording opportunities for many other lessons in child care.

In one of the smaller cities (it was generally recognized at these conferences that what is possible in a small city may not be advisable in a larger one) food preparation was with quantities sufficient for a family of six. The pupils always had the privilege of buying, but when it was evident that the supply would be greater than the demand the teacher notified various townswomen by telephone. These women were always glad of the opportunity to purchase cooked foods for the cost of the material.

Carefully directed publicity work in this city presented to school patrons some of the accomplishments of the home economics classes. The number of garments made and difference between the cost price and the sale value placed a cash value upon the accomplishments in these classes. While no educators would feel that these were the most worth-while results, yet they were tangible results which the layman might recognize while he might fail to understand the educational values.

In many sections of the country there has been a very general demand for reduction of taxation. Because the school's line of defense is weakest, the attack for reduction of taxation has frequently been directed against the public schools. In almost every case where reduction of school expenses has been decided upon, music, art, home economics, agriculture, and manual arts have been the first to suffer.

This may be traceable to a reawakening of the long dormant antagonism between the advocates of the so-called cultural curriculum and those who believe that the newer subjects are of equal value.

It was stated in one conference that—

A part of the weakness in the defense of these subjects has been due to the fact that the public is uncertain as to just what is to be expected to result from this teaching. Moreover, while quite as ignorant of the accomplishments in English, history, or geography teaching, many school patrons trust to their ability to judge the efficiency of teaching music, art, home economics, agriculture, or manual training.

The difficulties encountered by home economics teachers have not been well understood. Home economics frequently has been taught but once a week, the classes have been large, the children have been from homes affording greatly varying conditions, the equipment for teaching home economics has been inadequate, and the rooms have been unsatisfactory and unsuitable. It is not surprising that the progress of the girl has not been marked. Seldom have the conditions of teaching been presented to the mothers in the school community.

NEW ROOMS AND EQUIPMENT.

Great diversity of opinion was manifested in regard to what composed satisfactory equipment for home economics departments.

Many of the supervisors attending the New York conference visited new foods and housekeeping rooms in a New York City school. As explained by the home economics supervisor, these rooms provided for 12 girls, or one-third of the class, doing individual small quantity cooking at one long table with individual stoves along the center; for 12 girls in three unit kitchens doing family sized recipe work, while the last third of the class worked in a small housekeeping suite at general housekeeping. Two teachers were in charge of the class. Twenty-six was the number planned for, but the number was sometimes greater.

In Chicago newly and differently equipped rooms are being tried out. The supervisor there does not advocate a bathroom as part of the home economics equipment. She holds that the need of any work which is done should be evident to the child and that cleaning an unused tub is an absurdity that the child will recognize as such. The ordinary lavatory basins need cleaning and require the same kind of treatment as does a tub, and therefore the basin suffices and the tub is unnecessary.

The same is equally true of an unused or but slightly used housekeeping apartment. An apartment to be of value should serve some real purpose—it may be the girls' social center, the teachers' rest room and lunch room, or it may be a room used by the school nurse. The point stressed in the meetings was that it must have normal and constant use in order that the care of it may be justified in the minds of the pupil and that unless such a use exists the home economics department should not request its establishment.

A California supervisor is equipping all new foods classrooms as a series of unit kitchens. These kitchens are about 10 by 9 feet, open across the front, and with partitions about 7 feet high. In her words, "the children *love* to work in them." As one of the objectives of home-economics teaching is to make the girls love the activities of the household, such equipment is justified if it does so appeal to the child.

The equipment of these unit kitchens was not more expensive than the old-type hollow square. The tables used were common commercial kitchen tables, the stoves were the ordinary cabinet gas stoves most commonly used in the homes of the school patrons, and the kitchen cabinets were of a commercial type. A minimum of plumbing was required, because wherever possible the stoves were back to back, as were the sinks.

As there was a sink for every four pupils, this item was of greater cost than in the older type of equipment, but the cabinet stove, absence of portable ovens, and relatively short runs of plumbing pipes counterbalanced the sink expense. Commercial kitchen tables and cabinets are far less expensive than the hollow square desks and built-in cabinets.

Whether the tables are placed back to back, with a sink at one end and a stove at the other, or the stoves are placed in groups of four,

with the tables also grouped and sinks located along the walls, or the unit kitchen arrangement is chosen, or some modification of these selected that will meet peculiar local needs and local conditions, it seems certain that the installation of permanently located desks in hollow squares, with an individual stove for each pupil, is destined to be abandoned.

To make the foods room approach as nearly as possible the conditions existing in a satisfactory home seems to be the ambition of all home-economics teachers and supervisors.

All agreed upon certain desirable conditions for home economics:

1. There should be no basement rooms.
2. There should always be side lighting.
3. There should be no uncovered cement floors.
4. The coloring of walls should be light and attractive.
5. There should be ample blackboard and bulletin-board space.
6. Every foods room and every clothing classroom should have a storage closet or closets.
7. Ample locker space is essential.
8. An abundant supply of hot water at all times is an essential requisite.
9. Lavatory basins in each foods and each clothing room are necessary.
10. A drinking spigot or sanitary bubbler should be at each lavatory basin.
11. Provision for the proper service of food is an essential.
12. Good work can not be done in excessively large classes; hence equipment for 20 pupils is sufficient.
13. All home-economics rooms should be contiguous and should also be near to art rooms and the school lunch room.
14. Overelaborate equipment is not desired, and the custom obtaining in some places of allowing the building architect to design the home-economics equipment is deplored.
15. The administrative head of home economics should always be consulted, and she should make herself ready to decide intelligently on questions of rooms and equipment.

RESEARCH IN HOME-ECONOMICS EDUCATION.

At the Portland meeting there was an interesting description of certain home-economics educational research that was done at the State University of Washington.

This research centered around the question, What do girls do at home, preparation for which should be taught at school? The direct personal interview method of securing replies to a rather lengthy questionnaire was decided upon, as there seemed no reason to doubt that the most accurate data are secured in this way.

The interviewers made certain observations as to type of home, attitude of mother, standards of housekeeping, etc. Other informa-

tion was secured by questioning the mother. Whenever possible the presence of the recently graduated eighth-grade girl was secured.

The replies elicited evidenced that relatively few girls have managerial duties in the home, but that the great majority assist in the household in many ways. If the answers sometimes favored the girls and presented an over-optimistic picture of the household assistance they rendered, it at least presented a view of what the mothers conceived as being desirable attainments.

It was suggested that, if this type of research problem were undertaken in a number of different colleges and universities, from reliable replies to a thousand questionnaires data could be secured which would guide in the development of really valuable courses of study.

PLATOON TYPE OF SCHOOLS.

Home economics in the platoon type of school was discussed in many of the conferences. Certain conclusions were reached: First, that the home-economics teacher should be willing to adjust her schedule to the general school plan, but that she should urge upon the school authorities the need of 60-minute periods daily; second, that classes should not exceed 20 pupils; third, that by the adoption of the platoon plan (otherwise spoken of as the Gary plan) the home-economics pupils should not be exploited by being required to cook for the school lunch. As was said at one meeting:

It is as unreasonable to expect the girls to cook for the lunch room constantly as it would be to expect the boys daily to fire the furnace or clean the halls. Both of these latter jobs necessitate certain skill and knowledge and might be really educational for a few days, but after those few days they would be merely schoolboy exploitation. So it is when little girls must have all of their food work in lunch-room kitchens.

IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHERS IN SERVICE.

This topic received especial consideration at the New York and Chicago meetings. The change of personnel of the home economics teaching staff was shown to be frequent. In one city the changes average an entirely new staff every two years. The probability is that this is not greater than is general over the country.

In consequence, much of the time and attention of the city supervisor of home economics is devoted to securing and developing new teachers. One supervisor gave her method somewhat as follows:

Among my regular teachers—i. e., those who have been with me several years—I have some that are wonderfully good. These I never meddle with. I go to them not to improve them but to improve myself. Frequently I incorporate in brief circular letters the inspiration gained from them. I often send my struggling, new teacher to them that she may learn by observation how to solve her problems. There are always some teachers who are willing and desirous of doing good work, but lack courage and initiative. These are the ones I prod up with one or two page circular letters. In every school system there are some hopelessly poor teachers. These we must endure and place where they can do the least harm.

It is evident that the supervisor in the small city has a much easier job in regard to teacher improvement than have supervisors who at most can see their teachers but once in a year.

COOKING-CLASS PRODUCTS.

The suggestion as to the use of cooking-class products varied greatly. It was the general opinion that junior and senior high school girls should use quantities approximately the size demanded for a family of five or six and that as much independent work should be done as possible.

The plan of marketing class-cooked foods in the school lunch room met with approval when in such an arrangement the pupil and teacher can be protected from exploitation. Since lunches are not served in all schools, nor are all classes conducted in the morning, nor are all lunches when served under the jurisdiction of the school authorities, this method of affording an outlet for cooked foods is not always possible. Lunches for teachers also serve as a legitimate project, but again there are difficulties. The teachers are not always willing to be experimented upon, nor are the classes always scheduled for the late morning hours.

Marketing the product in the community has proved feasible in places from New York City to Puget Sound, but some school boards do not permit the handling of money by the teachers. "They can trust the minds of the children to the teachers, but dollars, being more precious to them, they do not so intrust." One Puget Sound city will finance the foods work by the sale of the product with no laboratory expense to the school system. There will be much educational gain by this business arrangement, but there will also be no inconsiderable loss.

Where foreign people have been accustomed to buy at delicatessen shops, they readily buy the products of the school-class work.

In some of the smaller cities it has been possible to secure almost all supplies for the foods work from the homes of the pupils and to return the cooked product to that home.

Not even in all parts of a city can the same practices be followed, but it is certain that the experience gained from using larger quantities and the stimulus of the criticism of those who consume the produced article are of undoubted value and should not willingly be overlooked.

BENEFIT OF THE CONFERENCES.

Not nearly all of the benefit derived from these conferences resulted from the discussions from the floor and by the listed speakers. Discussions of topics of special interest before and after the regular sessions in impromptu committees and at the meals were of greatest value, and the acquaintances there established will continue a source of strength throughout the year.

